

Executive Registry

70-6188

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18 December 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director-Comptroller
 THROUGH: Inspector General
 SUBJECT: EEO in the Office of Finance

1. The inquiry you requested, into the equality of employment opportunities for women in the Office of Finance, is now complete. Major findings are given herewith. I will provide the Director of Finance with further details.

2. The evidence, including interviews with 43 of the 100 women in grades GS-7 and above, supports the claim that in the past women were not considered for promotion and assignment opportunities as were men, especially at the GS-9 level and above. There is evidence which supports the charge that some women were denied positions or promotions at these levels, or received them after long delays. In fairness it must also be said that a large body of women who entered the Agency with little more than a high school education were given unusual opportunities to achieve grades of GS-6 to GS-8 and even GS-9 under the old system.

3. After the IG Survey Report in November 1967, new policies and practices were adopted in a complete overhaul of the Office of Finance's personnel management system. As a consequence, many but not all of the causes leading to unequal treatment in the SF Career Service have been corrected. It has of course not been possible to make retroactive improvements in the status of women or to rectify all of the alleged mistakes of the past.

4. Six cases came to my attention which appear to require further serious consideration for advancement with regard to positions and/or grades. Four of these are now being reviewed, and there is every reason to believe that the decisions will be in accord with objective findings. The other two appear to me to be cases which need attention. One is the classification of a position which has had adverse effects upon promotion [redacted]. The other centers on the rejection of a recommendation for promotion by the O/Finance but also involves a complex of other factors including assignment opportunities [redacted]. I am asking that both of these cases be reviewed in the proper channels.

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5. I believe that the Director of the Office of Finance will have to continue to give special attention to personnel management for some time to come. New personnel practices have perforce been superimposed upon a population which retains personnel with restricted capabilities and supervisors with habits of mind which effectively limited the consideration of women for advancement in the past. Despite the record of real improvement in the position of women through promotion, QSI's, and training, this achievement has to a degree been offset by a continuing atmosphere of distrust. Within the last two years the advancement of some women has been accompanied by visible signs of efforts on their own behalf--actions believed to be unnecessary for men to advance their positions. There have been cases in which men are believed to have been promoted or given assignments at the expense of women or in which women in comparable situations have not been similarly advanced. There appears to be sufficient truth in a number of these contentions, however few, to be a cause of concern. The claims are given additional credence by general discriminatory statements attributed to officers in supervisory positions, again within the last few years, which are prejudicial to opportunities for women.

6. My recent exposure to the Institution of Equal Employment Opportunity, while outside the scope of this inquiry, is germane to the situation in the Office of Finance, as well as to other parts of the Agency. I shall, therefore, comment very briefly on it. There is pressure to bring complaints on the grounds of discrimination. There is some irrationality born of emotion or frustration, and an inability to maintain a perspective with regard to what constitutes valid qualifications. There also appears to be a tendency to place the burden upon the defendant (the Agency) to prove that there has not been discrimination, and this is difficult. Cases are based more and more upon circumstantial evidence. Given this climate, the Office of Finance could be faced with charges of discrimination which could have a chance of some degree of success. The conditions which make this a possibility today will persist for some time in the profile of grades, positions, and movement within the SF career population. The situation can be alleviated only by giving equally persistent attention to the merits of individuals qua individuals in all personnel actions, and this will depend, to an unusual degree for the next few years, upon the persons who are the senior administrative officials of the Office.

cc: DD'S
D/Finance

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